

But the Camp is under siege.

PM Maliki wants to close the camp by December 31.

If the Camp is closed, many of the residents could be killed.

You see, Iraqi soldiers can't be trusted. In 2009 and 2011, they killed dozens of innocent civilians in the Camp.

Now Iran is promising all sorts of goodies if Iraq closes down the Camp.

Iran hates anyone who disagrees with its regime, so it wants nothing better than to have all these people in the Camp forcibly removed and eliminated.

But there is one tiny problem with Iran and Iraq's dirty little scheme: The world is watching.

Since the massacres, Camp residents have applied for UNHCR political refugee status.

It will take the U.N. 6 months to process their applications.

The U.N. Secretary General just wrote me yesterday to say that he has personally encouraged Maliki to not close the Camp down.

Sixty-five of my colleagues asked President Obama to raise this issue when he met with PM Maliki yesterday—we don't know if he did or not.

Maliki could be tried with war crimes if there is a New Year's massacre.

It should be the official policy of the United States to urge the government of Iraq to protect the residents, not return them to Iran, and not close the Camp until the U.N. can finish its political refugee process.

I am thankful to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs committee for their support of this policy.

We cannot allow Maliki to once again slaughter innocent civilians.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING THE MORTGAGE-BURNING SERVICE AT LITTLE UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Little Union Baptist Church, in Dumfries, Virginia, on the occasion of its June 11, 2011, "Mortgage-Burning Service."

The Deed for the first site of Little Union Baptist Church was signed on September 9, 1901, a gift of the land from John Thomas and Mary Bates Thomas to church trustees. For Mary Bates Thomas in particular, this gift represented a great achievement in the life of a truly amazing woman. Mary Bates was born into slavery in Northern Virginia. As a slave, Ms. Bates learned to read and write and participated in the camp meetings praising God and maintaining her undying faith in the face of such great hardship.

Following emancipation, Mary Bates Thomas became a pillar of her community, running a small general store with her husband John Thomas, reading and writing letters for the illiterate, and acting as a healer and midwife. Recognizing the need of her community for a church of its own, Mary Bates Thomas and her husband donated the land on which the church, which would come to be known as Lit-

tle Union Baptist, was built. Its diminutive name may have reflected its intimate membership early on, but the church acted as a focal point of the community and a great source of comfort and pride in times of both joy and difficulty.

In over one hundred years of serving the community, the Little Union family has grown in size, yet its mission, handed down from Mrs. Bates Thomas to the church leadership and today through the guidance of Reverend James Green, has always remained: "to establish a fellowship in Jesus Christ that will promote the Gospel throughout the community and the world."

Mary Bates Thomas would surely be proud to see what her church has become. Due to the generosity of the congregation, the able leadership of the church, and God's grace, today we may celebrate Little Union Baptist's satisfaction of its mortgage. Now in complete ownership of its house of worship, the church will be able use its resources in even greater support of other outreach ministries.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the "Mortgage Burning Service" for Little Union Baptist Church. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Little Union church family for establishing and maintaining a healthy house of worship that spreads the spirit of charity and provides counsel to those in need of guidance.

URGING TURKEY TO SAFEGUARD ITS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, as a strong supporter of religious freedom, I share the desire of many of my colleagues that our international relationships and foreign policy should reflect our values. A legacy of intolerance and violent conflict is still palpable in Turkey, decades after the upheavals and population transfers that took place as the Ottoman Empire collapsed. Greeks, Armenians, Assyrians, and others still live with this legacy, and for many decades Turkey's government failed to account for it or to take any steps to recognize it.

Yet, Turkey is undergoing profound and very hopeful changes today. The current Turkish leadership demonstrates an understanding of these changes. They are challenging entrenched, conservative orthodoxies and facing the past in ways that I believe we should encourage. That is why I cannot support the resolution before us today. It is out of step with the reality of today's Turkey, the U.S.-Turkish alliance, and the political realities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

I am concerned that H. Res. 306 would not only send the wrong signal, it would cause the deterioration of a relationship with an important ally without advancing the laudable goal of religious freedom.

The fact is, the Turkish government is moving in the right direction on this issue, and of their own accord. Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey announced last August that his government would return hundreds of properties that were confiscated from religious minorities by

the state or other parties since 1936, and would pay compensation for properties that were seized and later sold.

I don't think such a gesture should be repaid by a sense of Congress that claims that "the Republic of Turkey has been responsible for the destruction and theft of much of the Christian heritage within its borders" and which accuses our strongest Muslim ally of "official and unofficial acts of discrimination, intolerance, and intimidation." This is a government that has fought beside our soldiers in Afghanistan, and has provided training, overflight and logistical support that have been critical to the United States in Iraq.

While we debate this resolution, we can't ignore the fact that Turkey has taken important steps forward regarding civil and political rights, and is even now developing a new constitution to reflect Turkey's diverse society and its aspirations to become a more active member of the global community. This orientation should be encouraged. The resolution before us, in my view, does nothing to encourage Turkey on that path, regardless of what its backers are claiming.

Only in the last few months, Turkey has taken some very difficult and controversial steps that support the foreign policy of the United States. Perhaps the best example, and least well-known, is in Libya. While U.S. and N.A.T.O. forces were protecting Libyan civilians from a depraved dictator, the Republic of Turkey agreed to serve as a "protecting power" on behalf of the United States. In that capacity they represented the United States in Libya, including acting as consular officers on behalf of U.S. citizens in Libya and looking after American diplomatic facilities in the country. They also fully supported our goal of protecting the Libyan opposition, and pledged financial and material support to NATO to bring about a free, democratic, secure, stable, and united Libya. Is this how we repay them?

Another example of Turkey's positive role in the Mediterranean region is their government's decision to host a U.S. radar warning system in the southeastern region of the country. This is a landmark agreement for the alliance. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen called the installation a "critical contribution" to the Alliance's efforts to address the growing threat of proliferation. This effort is not inconsistent with Turkey's leadership on issues of international security—only last month Turkey hosted an important international security conference on Afghanistan, and Turkey continues to participate in military and civilian efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And Turkey has also demonstrated a willingness to challenge undemocratic and despotic neighbors, despite the risk to its own economic interests. The Turkish government has imposed sanctions on the Assad regime in Syria, and erected trade barriers that will make it harder for the dictatorship to remain in place. And the Erdogan government has also distanced itself from Iran by pushing for secular, democratic governments in Egypt, Tunisia and Syria. These are not easy steps for the Turkish government to take—Iran and Syria account for much of Turkey's eastern border and a large part of its trade. But they are pushing ahead, because they share our concern for democratic values. Turkey's government is showing that there can be no real peace without moral principles.

The resolution before us seems utterly ignorant of these critical developments. I cannot

support it, despite my profound wish that Turkey fully embrace the full diversity represented within its borders. Further, I would like to see the current government of Turkey—as well as the governments of Greece and Armenia—fully and fairly recognize the enduring pain that conflict and hatred have wrought in its territory. I feel that under Prime Minister Erdogan, that process of acceptance and accountability has begun. We in the United States Congress can support a process of authentic reconciliation, and we should.

Turkey is our strong ally and friend. By shoring up our friendship, we can have discussions about the shortcomings we see in our ally. But this resolution fails to meet the basic standard of an enduring alliance, and therefore must oppose it.

THE WATER FOR THE WORLD ACT OF 2012

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as America prepares for the holiday season, it is important to pause and reflect on what we can do for others as well as ourselves. I hope that Congress will give a gift of life, health and hope by helping people around the world with something that most Americans take for granted: safe drinking water.

Nearly 900 million of the world's poorest don't have clean drinking water, and fully 2.6 billion lack access to improved sanitation. This shortfall poses a significant challenge for development and security around the world, reinforcing a cycle of poverty and instability that represents both a humanitarian disaster and a national security threat.

Water-related diseases are particularly brutal in how they target children: 90% of all deaths caused by diarrheal diseases are children under 5 years of age, mostly in developing countries. In all, 1.8 million children under the age of 5 die every year, more than from AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. The economic impacts are devastating: inadequate sanitation in India alone costs that country \$53.8 billion, or 6.4 percent of its GDP every year.

What's more, dirty water directly affects every area of development. Children cannot attend school if they are sick from dirty water, and adults suffering from water-borne illnesses overwhelm hospitals and cannot go to work. Hours spent looking for and collecting clean water mean hours not spent adding to a family's economic well-being. In short, the best intentioned efforts at development fail if the basic necessity of clean water is not met.

In this period of good tidings, there is good news with water. The solution to this problem is cheap and relatively straightforward. We don't have to spend millions searching for a cure. Sometimes something as simple as teaching the value of hand washing, or providing access to technology we already have is all it takes to save millions of lives and increase economic development. What we lack is leadership and accountability.

It's time for Congress to act again. The Water for the World Act of 2012 builds on current U.S. efforts to provide those in need with

greater access to clean water and sanitation. And in this period of tight budgets, it is important that the Water for the World Act doesn't ask for any increase in funding, but rather improves the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of international aid programs. Given the strains on federal resources and the depth of need, it is essential that we are able to target our efforts more efficiently.

The Water for the World Act also gives the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development the tools needed to leverage the investments they are already making by elevating the current positions within the State Department and USAID to coordinate the diplomatic policy of the U.S. on global freshwater issues and to implement country-specific water strategies.

There is nothing more fundamental to the human condition and global health than access to clean water and sanitation. More needs to be done, and it needs to be done well. Taxpayers are rightly demanding better results and greater transparency from foreign aid. This bill provides the tools and incentives to do just that.

URGING TURKEY TO SAFEGUARD ITS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

SPEECH OF

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on H. Res. 306, urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties.

I believe that it is important for Secretary Clinton to discuss issues of religious freedom and equality with her Turkish counterparts, but I regret that Congress often fails to acknowledge the rapidly developing situation in Turkey, where the relationship between religion and state is evolving in positive and dynamic ways.

As a devout Christian and American, I believe that all religions should be treated equally, with dignity and respect, both here in the United States and abroad, and as such, I wish the resolution before us today would have offered a more balanced perspective, acknowledging the positive steps taken by the Turkish government.

Turkey is home to many faiths, and I believe that Turks take questions and concerns about religious freedom and equality very seriously. Turks are no strangers to religious restrictions, discrimination and prejudice, which confront many of their communities abroad.

I would like to commend the government of Turkey for its recent reform of The Law on Foundations, which enables the return of or compensation for immovable properties significant to religious minority communities. Congress should also acknowledge that Turkey has preserved or restored many sites of importance to religious minorities in recent years, and we should encourage the continuation of this important work.

I applaud the Turkish government for easing restrictions on the Greek Orthodox community and the Ecumenical Patriarch, initiatives that have been welcomed by the Hellenic communities in Turkey and the United States and improved relations between Turkey and Greece.

In another example of forward movement that Congress has yet to recognize, the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch led worship services in the historic Armenian church on Akhtamar Island near Van for the first time since World War I, attended by thousands of pilgrims from Turkey and abroad.

Congress should welcome Prime Minister Erdogan's commitment to return property to religious minority communities and recognize Turkey's status as a majority Muslim, democratic, secular state where all religions are equal.

The latest International Religious Freedom Report published by the State Department lists areas where the Turkish government has made significant advances, while calling for improvements in areas such as the reopening of the Halki Seminary on the island of Heybeli.

Further improvement is always possible, and as Turkey moves forward with constitutional reform efforts, I am confident that this process will recognize religious freedom, equality and plurality as universal values that should be upheld in every corner of the world.

SUDAN PRESS CONFERENCE

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I submit remarks I delivered at a Sudan press conference today hosted by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

SUDAN PRESS CONFERENCE,

1 P.M., DECEMBER 14, 2011, RAYBURN FOYER

We are surrounded today by photos which convey a dark but familiar story—Sudanese people, brutalized, marginalized and terrorized by their own government.

And yet, it seems this same regime has been afforded the privilege of legal representation in Washington by the Obama administration.

Earlier this week, I was outraged to learn that the genocidal government of Sudan led by Omar Hassan Bashir—an internationally indicted war criminal—now has a lawyer, Mr. Bart Fisher, on retainer in Washington.

According to a news report in Africa Intelligence, Mr. Fisher was hired with the express purpose of trying "to lift American sanctions against it."

In documentation posted on the Department of Justice Web site, it appears that Mr. Fisher was granted a license by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) at Treasury to provide this representation and that he plans to engage in political activities, among them, "Representations (including petitions) . . . to U.S. government agencies regarding sanctions . . ."

If true, I am appalled that this has been permitted and can't help but wonder if Mr. Fisher's political contributions were a factor. The administration should reverse this approval.

Martin Luther King famously said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

I can't help but wonder what the people of Sudan are thinking at this particular juncture when the administration struggles to find its voice on their behalf, while at the same time seemingly empowering the voice of their oppressors.

Would we even dream of allowing Milosevic, Karadzic or Gaddafi to have representation in the nation's capital?